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PP RUEHPB  
DE RUEHSV #0034 0291740  
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P 291740Z JAN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY SUVA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0289  
INFO RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY 0788  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1926  
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0217  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 1464  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0040

UNCLAS SUVA 000034

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BANGKOK FOR USAID/OFDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [FJ](#)

SUBJECT: FIJI INTERIM GOVERNMENT UPDATES FOREIGN MISSIONS  
ON IMPACT OF CYCLONE GENE - NO REQUEST FOR FOREIGN  
ASSISTANCE AT PRESENT

1. (U) Summary: On 1/30, Fiji's interim government briefed the international community on the impact of tropical cyclone Gene. Officials said that Gene, which passed over parts of Fiji 1/28 and 1/29, was responsible for seven deaths, considerable flooding and agricultural damage and cut-offs in water and electricity supplies. Damage to housing was "minimal." Over 1000 people spent time in evacuation centers in Fiji - most have returned home. Nadi town remains flooded and most roads into and out of Nadi are closed. The Rewa river in central and eastern Fiji continues to rise, raising concerns about new flooding if rain continues. Fiji officials are not presently asking for foreign assistance, but may ask the international community for help at a later date after the interim government has completed its full damage assessment.

2. (U) Parmesh Chand, Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, and Joeli Rokovada, Director of Fiji's National Disaster Management Office briefed representatives of foreign missions on the impact of tropical cyclone Gene January 30. Rokovada said the tropical cyclone warning has been lifted, but a strong wind warning remains in force and an active cloud band associated with the cyclone still covers the Fiji group. This cloud band continues to bring rain to many parts of Fiji. Rokovada said flooding is a major concern. Nadi town is currently flooded. The Rewa river continues to rise due to heavy upland rains, raising the specter of possible serious flooding in parts of central and eastern Viti Levu.

3. (U) Seven people died because of events related to the storm - due to electrocution from downed power lines, the inability to travel to hospitals for medical care, and a drowning. Water and electricity supplies were severely affected by the storm. Water in the Central Division (which includes Suva) will be restored fully by 1/31. Rokovada said health services were disrupted at several hospitals throughout the country, but that 80% of health centers now have running water. Clean up continues at the flooded Navua hospital (about 30 miles west of Suva). Housing damage was "minimal," said Rokovada, though 1152 people sought temporary shelter during and after the storm at 40 different evacuation centers. Agricultural damage is "extensive," he said and the interim government will provide relief assistance to that sector.

4. (U) In response to a number of questions from representatives of foreign missions, Chand and Rokovada said that the interim government is not currently asking for international assistance. When the National Disaster

Management Office completes its damage assessment, hopefully by the end of the week, the IG will be in a better position to determine if and where the international community can help. The officials noted that continued rain could cause further damage and affect their final assessment.

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